

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5606

INFO AMCONSUL DOUALA

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0893

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GB, EK

SUBJ: VISIT TO GABON OF PRESIDENT MACIAS

REF: LIBREVILLE 876 AND 882

1. EQUATORIAL GUINEAN PRESIDENT MACIAS ARRIVED LIBREVILLE MORNING JULY 13 ACCOMPANIED BY 7-MAN DELEGATION. HE WAS MET AT AIRPORT BY PRESIDENT BONGO WHO HAD GONE ALL OUT TO MAKE RECEPTION SUITABLY IMPRESSIVE. ELEMENTS OF GABONESE ARMED FORCES WERE DRAWN UP ON TARMAC AND SUBSEQUENTLY REVIEWED BY TWO PRESIDENTS. THREE GABONESE PROP-DRIVEN TRAINER/FIGHTERS TOOK OFF AND PASSED PARALLEL TO LANDING STRIP AS MACIAS LANDED.

2. DURING AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE BOTH PRESIDENTS REFERRED TO LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES BUT ALSO REFERRED TO "PROBLEMS" TO BE DISCUSSED. BONGO AND MACIAS EMBRACED, THEN STOOD SIDE BY SIDE IN PRESIDENTIAL VEHICLE AS IT DEPARTED AIRPORT.

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3. SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILY "GABON MATIN" OF JULY 13 IN
ANNOUNCING MACIAS VISIT SAID THAT IN SPITE OF EVIL
TONGUES "ALWAYS READY TO DESTROY AFRICAN SOLIDARITY"
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES REMAIN EXEMPLARY.

4. COMMENT. BONGO HAS SPARED NO PAINS IN PROVIDING
HIS NORTHERN VISITOR WITH A WARM AND IMPRESSIVE WELCOME.
BOTH PRESIDENTS EVIDENTLY DESIRE PUT ON A GOOD FACE
FOR THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND CONCEAL CURRENT BORDER ISSUE.
SIZE OF MACIAS ENTOURAGE WOULD INDICATE VISIT WILL INVOLVE
SERIOUS WORKING SESSIONS WHICH HOPEFULLY WILL HEAL LONG
FESTERING BORDER FRICTIONS.
COUNTRYMAN

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